THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (e). Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that effective October 18, 1994, interest rates on loans by all commercial banks (excluding Regional Rural Banks) have been prescribed as follows :

Credit limit	Rate of Interest per annum
Loans upto Rs. 25000/-	12.0 per cent
Loans above Rs. 25000/- but upto Rs. 2 lakh.	13.5 per cent
Loans above Rs. 2 lakhs	Free*

excepting Export Credit for specified periods

RBI have advised banks to fix their Prime Lending Rate (PLR) which will be the minimum lending rate to be charged by them for credit limits over Rs. 2 lakh. Banks may charge higher rates of interest from their borrowers enjoying credit limit over Rs. 2 lakhs depending, inter alia, credit ratings assigned by the bank. In the monetary policy for the second half of 1996-97 announced by RBI in October, 1996, banks have also been advised that alongwith announcement of PLR, they should also announce the maximum spread under the PLR or all advances (other than consumer credit).

Manufacture of Cars/Buses

2194. SHRI N.J. RATHWA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether a plan for the manufacture of cars/ buses with foreign collaboration in Gujarat especially in the tribal dominated areas is in existance or is under consideration;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether its impact on the existing car/bus manufacturers in the country has been analysed; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b). Location of units is not regulated in terms of the liberalised industrial policy. Government has approved setting up of joint venture between Birla Group of Companies and General Motors of USA for manufacture of cars and commercial vehicles. The joint venture has set up manufacturing facilities at Halol in Gujarat for a capacity of 25,000 vehicles per annum. The joint venture has already commenced production.

(c) and (d). Manufacture of all types of automotive vehicles has been delicensed under the new Industrial Policy and liberal import of technology is being permitted to the industry. These measures are expected to stimulate competitiveness and growth of the Indian automobile industry.

Smart Card Scheme

2195. SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH :
KUMARI UMA BHARATI :
DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce the 'Smart Card Scheme' in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme alongwith the purpose thereof; and

(c) the time by which this scheme is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) There is no proposal under consideration of the Government at present for introduction of the 'Smart Card Scheme' in the country.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

[English]

World Bank Loan for Farm Sector

2196. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India has sought loan from the World Bank for farm sector;

(b) if so, the amount of loan expected to be obtained from the World Bank;

(c) the specific areas in the farm sector where the World Bank loan is likely to be utilised; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) A delegation from the Govt. of India, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) visited Washington during November 15-20, 1996 for discussion with the World Bank on Rural Finance Reform in India.

(b) The first phase of the project is expected to receive a World Bank loan of US $ 400 million, with parallel financing of US $ 60 million equivalent from kfw.

(c) and (d). The World Bank loan is likely to be utilised for financial sustainability of Rural Financial Institutions (RFI), to improve access for women and underserved poor, to increase cost effectiveness of selected commercial banks, RRBs for providing financial services to rural sector, to encourage financially self-sustainable rural banking improved access to such financial services, especially for underserved poor, and lay the inalytical and experimental foundation for further reforms in the rural finance.